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I. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

On 28 May 1993, in a letter addressed to the Secretary-General (A/47/959-S-25862), the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People stated the following:

"In my capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I wish to draw your urgent attention to the serious situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, which is deteriorating steadily as a result of the prolonged closure of the territory and the isolation imposed by the occupying Power, and to the increasing number of casualties among the Palestinian civilian population, particularly children, resulting from the growing practice by Israeli troops of opening fire.

"According to a report published recently by the Jerusalem-based Palestine Human Rights Information Center, Israel's prolonged and indefinite closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the isolation of East Jerusalem since 30 March has been 'the most damaging and disruptive policy of the occupying Power on the daily lives of the Palestinian people under occupation'. This policy of collective punishment has, according to the same report, 'restricted the movement of millions of Palestinians and deprived them of access to health-care facilities, food and medical supplies, employment and education and places of worship in Jerusalem'.

"On 21 April, the New York-based human rights organization Middle East Watch expressed deep concern at the hardships caused by the closure of the territories, which include the abrupt loss of income for some 100,000 Palestinians who were employed in Israel and East Jerusalem; the lack of access to hospitals, mosques, churches, schools, banks and so on; and the fragmentation of the occupied territories into four sectors that are inaccessible to one another without permits that are hard to obtain.

"In addition to this harsh policy, the Israeli armed forces have recently increased the practice of opening fire and killing Palestinian civilians, including children. According to the Jerusalem-based Palestine Press Service, the number of Palestinians killed since the beginning of the month reached 25 on 19 May, including 6 children under 16 and one of 20 months who was killed in Jabalya refugee camp on 16 May. According to a report published in mid-May by B'Tselem, the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, 35 Palestinian children under 16 have been killed by Israeli forces since the beginning of the year, including 13 children under the age of 13.

"On behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I would like to express the greatest concern at these policies and actions of the Israeli authorities, which are in violation of Israel's obligations, as the occupying Power, under the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949 and numerous Security Council resolutions.

"The Committee considers that, pending tangible progress in the peace process, it is of the highest importance for the international community as a whole, and the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention in particular, to take all necessary measures to ensure the safety and protection of Palestinian civilians, particularly children, living under Israeli occupation."

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II. NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT COMMITTEE ON PALESTINE ADOPTS DECLARATION AT BALI ON 12 MAY 1993

*1. The Committee on Palestine of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) met at ministerial level on 12 May 1993 in Bali, Indonesia, under the chairmanship of His Excellency the Foreign Minister of Indonesia, Mr. Ali Alatas. It was attended by H.E. Mr. A. S. M. Mustafizur Rahman, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Bangladesh; H.E. Mr. R. L. Bhatia, Minister of State for External Affairs, India; H.E. Mr. Farouq Qaddoumi, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Palestine; H.E. Dr. Nathan M. Shamuyarira, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Zimbabwe; H.E. Mr. Hocine Djoudi, Secretary-General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Algeria; H.E. Mr. Raul Taladrid, Vice-President of the State Committee for Economic Cooperation, Cuba; H.E. Hon. Dr. D. W. C. Matutu, Deputy Minister for Commerce, Trade and Industry, Zambia; and H.E. Mr. Alia Diene Drame, Economic Adviser to the Prime Minister, Senegal.

*2. H.E. Mr. Farouq Qaddoumi briefed the meeting on the current situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem (Al-Quds), and also on the latest developments in the ongoing peace process in the Middle East.

*3. As a result of the persistence of Israel, the occupying Power, in its policies and practices in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem (Al-Quds), the situation continues to be of grave concern.

*4. Israel, in continued violation of its legal obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, has even escalated its brutal repression against the Palestinian people. Mass deportations tantamount to mass forced transfers of Palestinians were condemned by the United Nations Security Council in resolution 799 (1992). Israel persistently refuses to carry out the decision of the Security Council to ensure the safe, total and immediate return of the deportees to their homes. The members of the Committee are of the opinion that the Security Council should be called upon to perform its functions and carry out its duties and responsibilities, so as to ensure respect for the Council's decisions.

*5. The members expressed grave concern and alarm over the imposition by Israel of collective punishment, long curfews and closure of the occupied Palestinian territory, which resulted in grave economic hardships. They recalled that the Committee meeting held under the chairmanship of H.E. President Soeharto of Indonesia on 4 September 1992 warned of grave consequences as a result of the destruction of the economic infrastructure of the Palestinians under occupation.

*6. Of particular concern is the declared position of the Government of Israel and its persistence in implementing its policies and practices in Jerusalem (Al-Quds) by continuing to establish more settlements and imposing high taxation on Palestinian inhabitants of Jerusalem. The members of the Committee consider such acts as flagrant violations of United Nations Security Council resolutions 252 (1968), 465 (1980) and 478 (1980) and other relevant resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly. They affirmed the commitment of NAM to the above resolutions and consider that all Israeli practices aiming at changing the status and demographic composition of Jerusalem (Al-Quds) and the illegal establishment of settlements in Jerusalem and in all the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories are null and void.

*7. The members recalled Security Council resolution 681 (1990) and reaffirmed their call for immediate international protection to protect the Palestinians under occupation against the violations by Israel of the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention and the principles and objectives of international humanitarian law. The Ministers were of the opinion that the protection of the human rights of Palestinians under the occupation should be ensured and addressed by the World Conference on Human Rights to be held at Vienna in June 1993.

"8. On the question of the ongoing peace process, the members highly appreciated the flexibility and wisdom of the Palestinian leadership, namely the PLO, to contribute towards the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace. They were of the opinion that the procrastinating method of negotiation by Israel, and its failure to adhere to the basis of the ongoing process, namely, the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), land for peace, and the guaranteeing of the national and legitimate political rights of the Palestinian people, constitute an obstacle and not a contribution to the ongoing process. The members were of the opinion that such a process could lead to peace only when it is based on Israel's withdrawal from all the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem and all other occupied Arab territories, and which will guarantee the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights.

"9. The members of the Committee called for a more active involvement of the United Nations and its agencies, particularly in economic development of the Arab occupied territories. They reiterated the continuing responsibility of the United Nations on the question of Palestine.

"10. They agreed that the principle of the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant resolutions, particularly the resolutions of the Security Council, provide the correct and best basis for the achievement of a comprehensive, just and durable peace in the region.

"11. The members of the Committee expressed their gratitude and appreciation to His Excellency President Soeharto, as Chairman of NAM, for the decision he has taken to send a special envoy to the Arab countries taking part in the peace process at this crucial stage of negotiations. They also suggested to the Chairman of NAM that the same envoy could go to the two co-sponsoring countries of the peace process.

"12. The members of the Committee will continue their efforts within the Movement, the United Nations and all other regional and international forums to work for and attain the long-sought peace." (see A/47/957-S/25858)

III. WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY ADOPTS RESOLUTION CONCERNING HEALTH CONDITIONS OF THE ARAB POPULATION IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, INCLUDING PALESTINE

The World Health Assembly, at its forth-sixth session, adopted the following resolution at Geneva on 12 May 1993 (see WHA 46.26):

"The Forth-sixth World Health Assembly,

"Mindful of the basic principles established in the WHO Constitution, which affirms that the health of all peoples is fundamental to the attainment of peace and security,

"Seriously concerned over the deterioration of the health conditions of the Palestinian people living in the occupied Arab territories, as a result of occupying Power policies, including the measures which obstruct the delivery of health services to the Arab population in the occupied Arab territories,

"Concerned about violations by the occupation authorities of the human rights of the Palestinian people during the intifadah, on account of their negative effects on health particularly at a time when social and economic conditions in the territories are deteriorating,

"Recalling the need for the occupying Power to observe strictly its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention (1949), to which it has notably not conformed in such basic areas as health,

"Aware of its responsibility for ensuring proper health conditions for all people who are victims of exceptional situations, including settlements which are contrary to the Fourth Geneva Convention,

"Recognizing the need for increased support and health assistance for the Palestinian people, as well as the Syrian Arab people in the Golan under Israeli occupation, and for stronger cooperation with them,

"Expressing the hope that the peace talks among the parties concerned in the Middle East will lead to a just and comprehensive peace based on the principles of international legitimacy and, in particular, on relevant United Nations resolutions, including the improvement of health conditions,

"Regretting the refusal of the Israeli authorities to allow the Special Committee of Experts to visit the occupied Arab territories,

"Having considered the report of the Director-General on the health conditions of the Arab population in the occupied Arab territories, including Palestine,[1]

"Recalling Health Assembly resolutions on the health conditions of the Arab population in the occupied Arab territories, including Palestine,

"1. Asserts WHO's responsibility to promote for the Palestinian people in the occupied Arab territories the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health as one of the fundamental rights of every human being;

"2. Expresses concern at the deterioration in the health conditions of the Arab population in the occupied Arab territories, affirming that it is the role of the World Health Organization to assist in the provision of health care to the Palestinian people and the other Arab populations in the occupied Arab territories;

"3. Welcomes the resumption of the peace talks and expresses the hope that the peace talks will lead quickly to a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, so that the Palestinian people can exercise responsibility for their health services and develop their health plans and projects to participate with the peoples of the world in the achievement of WHO's objective of 'Health for All by the Year 2000';

"4. Stresses that the policies of the Israeli authorities in the occupied Arab territories are not consistent with the development of a health system appropriate to the needs of the Palestinian people, and that the only way to develop such a system is by enabling the Palestinian people to run their own affairs and oversee their own health services;

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[1]WHO document A/46/24.

"5. Deplores the continuing deterioration of the situation in the occupied Arab territories, which seriously affects the living conditions of the people, compromises in a lasting fashion the future of the Palestinian society, and prevents the economic and social development of those territories;

"6. Expresses its deep concern at the Israeli refusal to permit the Special Committee of Experts to visit the occupied Arab territories, requesting that Israel allow the Committee to fulfil its mission of investigating the health conditions of the populations in those territories;

"7. Thanks the Chairman of the Special Committee of Experts and requests the Special Committee of Experts to continue its mission and report on the health conditions of the Arab population in the occupied Arab territories to the Forty-seventh World Health Assembly;

"8. Recalls resolutions WHA42.14, WHA43.26, WHA44.31 and WHA45.26 and commends the Organization's efforts to prepare and implement the special technical assistance to improve the health conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Arab territories;

"9. Thanks the Director-General for his efforts, requesting him, in the light of relevant Health Assembly resolutions:

(1) To continue the efforts to implement the special assistance programme, emphasizing the primary health care approach, in coordination with all Member States, observers and all other organizations involved in health and humanitarian activities;

(2) To further coordinate health activities, in particular in priority areas such as maternal and child health and an expanded programme of immunization, to cope with worsening problems related to water supply, sanitation and disposal of solid waste in the occupied Arab territories, and to help with planning in environmental health;

(3) To provide the systematic support required to enable the Palestinian people to assume responsibility for their health services, and to strengthen the role of the organizational unit on the health of the Palestinian people, the establishment of which at WHO headquarters was approved, in order to support training programmes for Palestinian health and administrative manpower;

(4) To pursue the implementation of special technical assistance to improve the health conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Arab territories, in cooperation with all Members and observers in WHO referred to in Health Assembly resolutions related to this item;

(5) To continue his efforts to seek funds from extrabudgetary sources in support of the special technical assistance programme, taking into consideration the development of the comprehensive health plan for the Palestinian people;

(6) To report on the above to the Forty-seventh World Health Assembly;

"10. Thanks all Member States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and calls on them to continue to contribute to the special assistance programme to improve the health conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Arab territories."

12th plenary meeting
12 May 1993

IV. UNRWA DONOR MEETING FOCUSES ON AGENCY'S BUDGETARY CRISIS AND PROLONGED CLOSURE OF OCCUPIED TERRITORY

The following press release was issued by UNRWA on 7 May 1993:

"The Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Ilter Turkmen, warned of a substantial reduction in services to Palestine refugees if contributions to alleviate the Agency's $28.5 million deficit were not forthcoming. Speaking at UNRWA's informal meeting of Governments held at Agency headquarters in Vienna on 6 and 7 May, Mr. Turkmen told representatives of 24 Governments and the European Community that the closure of the occupied territory constituted a new emergency which placed additional strain on Agency finances on top of the 1993 deficit.

"Referring to the resumption of the Middle East peace talks in Washington, D.C., the Commissioner-General spoke of 'a revival of hope', but said that in stark contrast to that development, one saw in the occupied territory that the economic, social and security situation was worse than ever. Since the beginning of the closure, unemployment has almost reached the 50 per cent mark in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Violence continues to increase: 74 Palestinians, including 18 children, were killed in the occupied territory between 1 December 1992 and 4 May 1993, as compared with 59 fatalities throughout 1992.

"'As the economy grinds to a halt,' said Mr. Turkmen, 'UNRWA finds itself bearing the brunt of the Palestinians' despair.' Since December 1987, the Agency has undertaken a number of emergency relief distributions and has recently begun to extend food aid in the occupied territory in response to the present crisis. The Commissioner-General appealed to donors for additional quantities of flour, rice and sugar.

"The Commissioner-General also spoke of the special hardship faced by Palestine refugees in Lebanon and urged donors to contribute funds for the refugees' most pressing needs in that country: housing and environmental health.

"In her statement to delegates participating in the working group on socio-economic concerns, West Bank field director Gun-Britt Andersson noted that restrictions on movement caused by the sealing-off of the West Bank from Jerusalem has severely hampered Agency operations as many staff were prevented from reaching UNRWA installations in Jerusalem.

"During the meeting, Government representatives commended the work of the Agency and the motivation and dedication of staff in the field. They also expressed their concern over UNRWA's financial difficulties and the deteriorating situation in the occupied territory, and urged UNRWA to broaden its donor base.

"Two donors announced special in-kind contributions: Spain pledged food aid valued at 40 million pesetas ($342,000), and Denmark pledged a contribution in the form of equipment for the Gaza Hospital, valued at 40 million crowns ($6.5 million). Italy announced an increase of 2 billion lira ($1.33 million) over its 1992 regular contribution.

"Several donor Governments announced additional contributions which will help address the Agency's deficit. Japan increased its contribution to the 1993 regular budget by $1 million. Prior to the meeting, Canada had announced an extra $Can 500,000 ($413,000) to the Extraordinary Measures for Lebanon and the occupied territory and Turkey made an additional pledge of $20,000.

"Concluding the meeting, the Commissioner-General reiterated his gratitude to donors who responded to his appeals with additional or increased contributions. He expressed his hope that those Governments which had decreased their contributions in 1993 would be able to return to previous levels in 1994." (see PAL/1796)

V. NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS: ACTIVITIES AND INFORMATION

In the course of May, the following information was received by the Division for Palestinian Rights:

1. Israel and Palestine Political Report, available from: Magelan and Association Mashdek Développement ISSN 0294 1341, Boite Postale 130, 75463 Paris CEDEX 10, France.

2. The Other Front, weekly bulletin on developments in Israeli society, available from: The Alternative Information Centre, P.O. Box 24278, Jerusalem.

3. The Other Israel, newsletter of the Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace, available from: P.O. Box 2542, Holon, Israel 58125.

4. Briefing, publication of the Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding, available from: 21, Collingham Road, London SW5 ONU, United Kingdom.

5. Middle East International, biweekly publication, available from: P.O. Box 53365, Temple Heights Station, Washington, D.C. 20009, United States of America.

6. The Yale Journal of International Law, Winter 1993 issue, concerning "Legal Decision-Making During the Palestinian Intifada". Available from: College of Law, 280 Boyd Law Building, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa 52242-1113, United States of America.

7. ADC Times, publication of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee. Available from: 4201 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 500, Washington, D.C. 20008, United States of America.

8. The Middle East, monthly publication available from: IC Publications Ltd., 7 Coldbath Square, London ECIR 4LQ, United Kingdom.

9. Samed Palestinian Prison Voices, publication of Mandela Institute for Political Prisoners, available from: P.O. Box 19543, Jerusalem.

10. Washington Report on Middle East Affairs, available from: The American Educational Trust, P.O. Box 53062, Washington, D.C. 20009, United States of America.

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